

1. A method for shredding documents rendering information contained in the documents unintelligible, comprising the steps of:
determining a desired cut pattern for a document;
adjusting one or more cutting devices in accordance with the desired cut pattern; and
cutting the document into segments in accordance with the desired cut pattern.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of determining a desired cut pattern for a document includes the steps of:
providing an image of the information contained in the document; and
processing the image in accordance with a predetermined set of rules to determine the desired cut pattern.

3. The method of Claim 2 wherein the step of providing an image of the information contained in the document includes the steps of:
scanning the document; and
storing the scanned image.

4. The method of Claim 1 including the step of disposing of the cut segments of the document in a disposal bin.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein the one or more cutting devices comprises an adjustable document shredder.

6. The method of Claim 1 wherein all cuts are in blank spaces on the document.

7. The method of Claim 6 wherein no more than one cut per segment will traverse a mark on the document.

8. The method of Claim 7 wherein the number of cuts traversing a mark on the document will not exceed a predetermined limit for each page of the document.

9. The method of Claim 2 wherein the image of the information contained in the document comprises a digital image.

10. Apparatus for shredding a document rendering information contained in the document unintelligible, comprising:

a document reader for providing an image of the information contained in the document;

a processor coupled to the document reader for analyzing the image to determine a desired cut pattern; and

a document shredder responsive to instructions generated by the processor for cutting the document into segments in accordance with the desired cut pattern.

11. Apparatus as in Claim 10 further comprising an input tray for storing the document and for feeding pages of the document to the document reader.

12. Apparatus as in Claim 11 further comprising an intermediate paper tray for receiving pages from the document reader after each page is read, and for subsequently feeding the read pages to the document shredder.

13. Apparatus as in Claim 10 further comprising a shredder controller coupled to the processor and to the document shredder, responsive to instructions generated by the processor for controlling the document shredder.

14. Apparatus as in Claim 13 wherein the document shredder includes adjustable cutting components responsive to cut control signals generated by the shredder controller to adjust the size and position of cuts in the document in accordance with the desired cut pattern.

15. Apparatus as in Claim 13 wherein the shredder controller is coupled to a document input tray, the document input tray responsive to feed control signals generated by the shredder controller to feed pages of a document to the document reader and to the document shredder in a coordinated manner ensuring that the desired cut pattern for a page is determined prior to that page being cut into segments.

16. Apparatus as in Claim 10 wherein the desired cut pattern is determined in accordance with a predetermined set of rules.

17. Apparatus as in Claim 16 wherein all cuts made in accordance with the desired cut pattern are located in blank portions of the document.

18. Apparatus as in Claim 16 wherein no more than one cut per segment traverses a mark on the document.

19. Apparatus as in Claim 16 wherein the number of cuts traversing a mark on the document will not exceed a predetermined limit for each page of the document.

20. Apparatus as in Claim 10 wherein the document reader comprises a scanner.

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8/26/02

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21. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 10 wherein the document shredder comprises a pair of cutter rotors for cutting the document into strips, each cutter rotor having a plurality of spaced first cutter blades mounted on a rotatively driven shaft, the spacing between the first cutter blades on each shaft being adjustable, each first cutter blade mounted on a first shaft being in opposing and slightly overlapping relationship and meshing with a corresponding first cutter blade mounted on a second shaft.

22. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 21 wherein the first cutter blades are slideably mounted on the shaft.

23. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 22 wherein the position of each of the first cutter blades on its respective shaft is individually adjustable by an electrical actuator.

24. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 22 wherein the position of opposing first cutter blades on their respective shafts is adjustable by an appropriate amount to ensure that the opposing first cutter blades mesh with each other and maintain an overlapping relationship.

25. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 21 wherein the spacing between the first cutter blades being adjustable responsive to control signals generated by a shredder controller to adjust the width of the strips and position of cuts in the document in accordance with the desired cut pattern.

26. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 21 wherein a paper path is defined through the document shredder, the paper path moving a document between the opposing first cutter blades, the document shredder further comprising at least one second cutter blade disposed in a plane generally normal to the paper path, the at least one second cutter blade for cutting the document generally transverse to the direction of flow of the paper path.

27. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 26 wherein the at least one second cutter blade is disposed downstream in the paper path of the pair of cutter rotors.

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28. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 27 wherein the at least one second cutter blade cuts the strips into desired lengths, the desired length being a function of the speed of the document as it moves through the document shredder along the paper path.

29. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 28 further comprising a variable speed paper feed actuator responsive to control signals from a shredder controller for varying the speed of a document as it moves through the document shredder to adjust the length of the strips and position of cuts in the document in accordance with the desired cut pattern.

30. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 29 wherein the variable speed paper feed actuator comprises an electrical stepper motor.

31. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 26 wherein the at least one second cutter blade comprises at least one second cutter blade disposed for reciprocal motion on one side of the paper path, the at least one second cutter blade impacting a platen on the opposite side of the paper path.

32. (new) Apparatus as in Claim 26 wherein the at least one second cutter blade comprises at least one pair of second cutter blades, each second cutter blade of the at least one pair of second cutter blades disposed for reciprocal motion on a side of the paper path in opposing relationship with the other one second cutter blade, the at least one pair of opposing second cutter blades meshing and slightly overlapping at the paper path.
